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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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ANNAPOLIS DRUG DEALERS ARRESTED

BALTIMORE, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced today that a federal grand jury has indicted the following defendants for crimes committed in connection with a conspiracy to distribute cocaine base, commonly known as “crack” cocaine, in public housing projects in Annapolis:

Tariq BELT, age 27, of Annapolis, Maryland;

Gerald HYMAN, JR., age 33, of Annapolis, Maryland;

Rashid PROCTOR, age 26, of Annapolis, Maryland;

Otto THORPE III, age 25, of Annapolis, Maryland;

Vincent BLAIR, JR., age 24, of Glen Burnie, Maryland;

Warren YOUNG, age 33, of Glen Burnie, Maryland;

Joseph EDWARDS III, age 21, of Annapolis, Maryland;

Anthony WHITE, SR., age 35, of Columbia, Maryland; and

Cassandra WHITE, 32, of Annapolis, Maryland.

In addition to being charged with conspiracy, HYMAN is charged with distribution of crack cocaine and possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine. In addition to being charged with

conspiracy, THORPE is charged with distribution of crack cocaine and possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime, while BLAIR is also charged with distribution of crack cocaine.

These defendants were arrested on August 21 and 22, 2003 by members of a task force comprised of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Anne Arundel County Police Department and the Annapolis City Police Department following over a year long investigation.

If convicted of the drug conspiracy charges, each defendant faces a maximum penalty of life imprisonment with a minimum mandatory sentence of 10 years and a fine of up to \$8,000,000. The drug distribution charges and the firearms charge also carry maximum penalties of up to life imprisonment with fines up to \$4,000,000.

An indictment is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

Arraignment dates are pending for each of the defendants.

The criminal charges in this indictment are the result of a joint investigation by the DEA, the Anne Arundel County Police Department, the Annapolis City Police Department and the United States Attorney's Office. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jane M. Erisman and Christopher J. Romano.